

**May 18, 2005**

District of Columbia

Bowie

College Park

Frederick County

Gaithersburg

Greenbelt

Montgomery County

Prince George's County

Rockville

Takoma Park

Alexandria

Arlington County

Fairfax

Fairfax County

Falls Church

Loudoun County

Manassas

Manassas Park

Prince William County

## **2.6 Standard Operating Procedures for Local, State, and Federal Agency Participating in MIRS**

The Metropolitan Interoperability Radio System (MIRS) comprises an interface/interconnect system that features the Raytheon / JPS Communications ACU-1000, an audio matrix switch. The basic system components are interface modules, each of which is designed to connect to radios of disparate frequencies, telephone, and voice over IP (VoIP) components. The computer-controlled system can be configured to create up to seven different patches simultaneously. The system configuration includes primary agencies, which can be interconnected immediately, and secondary agencies, which require the agency controlling the system to manually change radio channels at the switch.

Participation in MIRS is available to all local, state, and federal public safety agencies in the metropolitan Washington, DC, area. All requests to participate in, or withdraw from, the MIRS will be made in writing to the host agency and the appropriate COG Subcommittee. The request will be prepared on official letterhead and include the application found below. Although the COG will coordinate administrative control over system operations and participation, final approval is to be provided by the host agency. Due to the range limitation of some radio systems, limited frequencies for a given agency, and the interconnect capacity of the technology used to establish a MIRS patch, not all participating agencies will be charged with the same responsibilities. For this reason, participating agencies will be separated into three categories: host, primary, and secondary.

It will be the responsibility of the COG Police Communications Subcommittee to coordinate with the primary and secondary agencies assigned to a MIRS host agency's system. In addition, the subcommittee will ensure the addendum outlining each host agency's MIRS patch capabilities is kept up to date and distributed quarterly. When categorizing agencies as primary or secondary, the subcommittee will consider geographic location, radio coverage, and the likelihood of emergency communications interoperability needs as they relate to each of the host agency locations.

### **Host Agency:**

The agencies that house a MIRS system component will be referred to as "host agencies" in this document. Host agencies own, maintain, and operate audio matrix switches in the MIRS network. A current list of host agencies will be maintained and attached to this document. For any event requiring multiple responses across the public safety domains, a host agency will act as the point of contact when initiating the MIRS patch.

**Primary Agency:**

A primary agency is one with an active operations resource programmed into the MIRS system at the host agency site. When the MIRS system radio is switched on, the primary agency's radio resource is the default channel or mode selected. In the event of an emergency request for a patch to another primary agency, participating agencies will relinquish primary operations channels for the emergency incident until it is resolved, stabilized, or moved to another channel.

**Secondary Agency:**

Secondary agencies are described as agencies that provide resources programmed in the MIRS system at the host agency site, but whose resources must be manually selected on the radios in which their resources are programmed. This extra step for establishing connectivity delineates the main difference between a primary and secondary agency, as the secondary agency's communications resource is not displayed by default. Generally, these agencies do not require communications interoperability with other agencies on a regular basis. In addition, tactical resources (other than the primary operations channel) of the primary agencies, mutual aid, and interoperability channels available for use by public safety organizations are considered secondary agencies. Due to the limitations of the MIRS equipment (a maximum of either 12 or 24 radios can be used, depending on the host agency configuration), not all of the participating agencies in the Metropolitan Washington COG area will have immediate emergency MIRS patch capabilities. Emergency MIRS patches are available to secondary agencies; however, those patches will require extra set-up time because radio frequencies must be manually selected before the patch can be established.

It is the responsibility of each MIRS participating agency to provide frequency information, private line (PL) codes or Network Access Codes (NAC), and talk groups to the host agency for the programming of the MIRS radios. Request for participation and submission of the frequency information grants authority for the rebroadcast over the participating agency's radio system, as outlined in this agreement. It will be the responsibility of each participating agency to promptly notify the appropriate host agency and COG Subcommittee of any changes to its radio system resources that would affect the MIRS configuration.

A MIRS patch will not be established until the participating agency makes an official request (as outlined in this agreement). A host agency will immediately honor any request by a participating agency to disconnect a MIRS patch. A host agency will monitor the cross-connect function (i.e., patch) periodically to ensure it continues to operate correctly.

**MIRS Operations**

1. MIRS capabilities will be located at various public safety agencies in the region. Different agencies will be identified as the primary law enforcement, fire/rescue/EMS, and federal control points. Other than system testing, utilization of MIRS will be limited to emergency incidents, special events and tactical operations, and disasters.

- a. Under normal operating conditions, MIRS traffic will consist of systems testing. MIRS is not intended for dispatch-center-to-dispatch-center communications.
  - b. For day-to-day emergency incidents, MIRS supports the communications requirements for first and secondary responders as well as initial recovery efforts. The agency responsible for the incident will initiate the request for a MIRS patch. Note that initiating agencies requiring a MIRS patch will relinquish an operational resource for the duration of the event or until the event is moved to an alternate resource. All participating agencies are encouraged to use the MIRS patch whenever the operational need for cross band radio communications arises.
  - c. For special events or pre-planned operations, the lead agency is responsible for coordinating the use of MIRS with participating agencies, including the appropriate host agency. Requests should be made through appropriate internal approval structure. Whenever possible, the lead agency should request that a notification page also be transmitted over the Regional Incident Communication Coordination System (RICCs) system by the network coordinator (DC Emergency Management Agency or their designee).
  - d. The MIRS system is intended to be scalable to accommodate operations ranging from first response to command and control operations. Participating agencies are encouraged to use existing pre-programmed capabilities to support wireless communications whenever possible. When the situation stabilizes, alternate on-site communications (i.e., portable cross band interconnect equipment) should be deployed and the MIRS system returned to stand-by mode.
2. MIRS assets are best suited for events requiring a multi-jurisdictional response among agencies with disparate radio systems. The MIRS patch does not extend coverage for existing radio systems. However, interoperability between disparate radio systems is easily achieved using this patching technique. Furthermore, MIRS is not intended to replace the capabilities of communications support vehicles or operational command buses.

## **Operational Procedures**

1. The requesting/initiating agency's dispatch center or communications section will call the appropriate host agency (refer to Tables 2.1-5) to establish a MIRS patch. PMARS will serve as the primary notification vehicle for law enforcement agencies requesting a MIRS patch. Telephone requests from the dispatch center or communications section are considered alternate methods for notification. The host agency will announce on PMARS when the MIRS patch is in place.
2. Each participating agency will be responsible for clearing all non-related communications from the radio channel to be used for the MIRS patch.
3. The host agency will control MIRS within its site service area. In the event of a mobile incident, the host agency will relinquish control of MIRS operations to the receiving jurisdiction when the receiving jurisdiction's control point advises that it is prepared to assume control. Again, note that MIRS will not extend the coverage area of any radio system; when a unit is out of range of its own system, it will lose communications interoperability. If the agency responsible for the incident requires modification to the patch (i.e., an agency added or removed), the request will be made by the controlling agency via PMARS. If the controlling agency does not have PMARS capabilities, notification will be relayed using the telephone.
4. The dispatchers of agencies using a MIRS patch will monitor MIRS communications. Direct participation of dispatchers will be coordinated to reduce confusion. Dispatchers will serve as resource agents, providing support as requested by MIRS patch mobile units. As a general rule, the dispatcher of the agency where the incident is currently occurring is responsible for providing service to all agencies using the MIRS patch.
5. Field units participating in a MIRS operation will be identified by their departmental name followed by their unit designation. For example: Prince George's County A-2 or Metropolitan Scout 99.
6. All transmissions will be in plain language.
7. The use of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) shall be encouraged in all MIRS operations.

## **General Testing Procedures**

1. The COG maintains testing results for MIRS. The main purpose for maintaining these results is to provide complete, accurate, and timely information for the respective chiefs of police and unit commanders. This information can then be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of MIRS.

2. MIRS testing will be initiated by a host agency. The host agency will coordinate each test with participating agencies. The MIRS test will be conducted by participating agencies on primary radio resources.
3. The Administrative POC (see Table 2.1) within each participating MIRS host agency is responsible for ensuring that testing is conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in this manual.
4. The designated host agency shall conduct a MIRS test with each primary agency at least once per month. The host agency will vary the time of the test to cover various shifts. The tests may be conducted at any convenient time, provided that each primary agency is tested at least once per month.

## **MIRS TESTING PROCEDURES**

1. The host agency shall contact at least two primary agencies participating on the local host system and request to begin an operational test. The contacted agencies will be responsible for controlling traffic on the primary resource that will be used for the test.
2. The host agency will announce over PMARS that a test of MIRS is in progress.
3. Participating agencies will provide unit identifiers to the host agency prior to testing. The host agency will cross-connect the participating agencies together and announce over the patch which units will be conducting the test.
4. A unit from the first agency will call the unit from the second agency to test the patch. An example of this would be: "Test, Test, Fairfax County Police Scout 920B to Metropolitan Police Unit 340, how do you copy this unit?" The Metropolitan unit will reply, then transmit a similar message. Both units should describe the quality of the transmissions to the host agency. If the units could clearly hear each other, the test was successful and will be noted as such in the test log. If units could not clearly hear each other, the test is considered unsuccessful. The host agency will note the results, attempt to determine the potential reasons, and attempt to resolve the issue.
5. After the test of the primary agencies, the MIRS system will be returned to stand-by mode. At least once each month, a test of at least two secondary agencies shall take place, with results recorded in the same manner as primary agency testing. These secondary agencies should be varied from month to month.
6. After testing is complete, the host agency will confirm that the MIRS has been returned to stand-by operating mode, followed by an announcement via PMARS that MIRS testing is complete.
7. The Administrative POC for each host agency will conduct equipment testing as needed. Each host agency will maintain its own equipment testing log.

8. Blank monthly test report forms will be supplied to each host agency by COG. Host agency personnel conducting the test shall indicate both the successful and unsuccessful patch tests and the time of day the test was conducted.
9. The Monthly Test Report shall be mailed, by the fifth of the following month, to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Host agencies shall keep on file test logs for at least the previous 2 months.
10. The COG shall distribute the Monthly Test Results to the participating COG agencies.



**Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
Metropolitan Interoperability Radio System**

*Application for Participation*

Page 1 of 2

Agencies applying for participation in the Metropolitan Interoperability Radio System (MIRS) must attach this completed application to their request, as submitted by the agency head on signed official agency letterhead

Agency and Contact Information	
Agency Name	<b>Bladensburg Police Department</b>
Address 1	<b>4910 Tilden Road</b>
Address 2	
City, State, Zip + 4	<b>Bladensburg, MD 20710</b>
Commander Name/Rank	
Telephone Number	<b>( 301) 864-6080</b>
Facsimile Number	<b>(301) 209-7152</b>
Electronic Mail Address	<b><u>cowens@bladensburg.net</u></b>
Web Site Address	<b><u>www.bladensburg.net</u></b>
Technical Advisor or Administrative Point of Contact Name/Rank	<b>Charles L. Owens Lieutenant</b>
Address 1	<b>4910 Tilden Road</b>
Address 2	
City, State, Zip +4	<b>Bladensburg, MD 20710</b>
Work Telephone Number	<b>( 301) 864-6080</b>
Cellular Telephone Number	<b>(240) 338-1717</b>
Electronic Mail Address	<b><u>cowens@bladensburg.net</u></b>
Central Dispatch Emergency Telephone	<b>( 301) 864-0400</b>
Central Dispatch Non-Emergency Telephone	<b>( 301) 864-6080</b>

***Application for Participation - MIRS***

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Radio System Information	
SUBMIT ONE PAGE FOR EACH SYSTEM FOR WHICH YOU OPERATE AND REQUIRE MIRS	
System Type (Check One)	<input type="checkbox"/> Digital <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Analog <input type="checkbox"/> Trunked <input type="checkbox"/> Conventional
Frequency Band (Check One)	<input type="checkbox"/> VHF/Low Band <input type="checkbox"/> VHF/High Band <input type="checkbox"/> UHF <input type="checkbox"/> UHF/T-Band <input type="checkbox"/> 700 MHz <input type="checkbox"/> 800 MHz
Operating Configuration (Check all that Apply)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Narrow Band <input type="checkbox"/> Wide Band <input type="checkbox"/> Project 25 Compatible
Communications System Security (Check all that Apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> AES Encryption <input type="checkbox"/> DES Encryption <input type="checkbox"/> Other Encryption Standard _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unencrypted
System Coverage (General Description, e.g., countywide, statewide, regional, radius)	Regional

Primary Radio Resource to be Connected to MIRS	
Frequency or Talk Group	458.9 mhz tx / 453.9 mhz rx
PL Code / NAC / Control Tone	PL 4A
Trunked Radio System ID	N/A
System Key	N/A
Location of Nearest Base Station to MIRS (Street Address or Latitude/Longitude)	Alexandria, Virginia
Channel or Talk Group Name (e.g., Primary Dispatch, TAC 1, Surveillance, etc.)	Primary Dispatch

Secondary Radio Resource to be Connected to MIRS	
Frequency or Talk Group	
PL Code / NAC / Control Tone	
Trunked Radio System ID	
System Key	
Location of Nearest Base Station to MIRS (Street Address or Latitude/Longitude)	
Channel or Talk Group Name (e.g., Primary Dispatch, TAC 1, Surveillance, etc.)	



***Application for Participation - MIRS***

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If there are additional communications resources that you wish to use to establish connectivity through MIRS, please include a separate sheet for each additional resource.

This application is submitted by the requesting agency for participation in MIRS. MIRS participation is governed through the use of this document. Submission of this application grants the authority for the rebroadcast of cross-patched radio transmissions over the requesting agency's designated primary and/or secondary communications resources.

Signed  \_\_\_\_\_

Name John E. Moss  
(Please Print Neatly)

Rank Chief of Police  
(Please Print Neatly)

This application must be signed by the agency head or his/her designee and submitted to the MIRS host agency and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments for consideration.



**Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments**

Public Safety Program Manager  
777 North Capitol Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002-4239

Telephone (202) 962-3261  
Facsimile (202) 962-3204

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